

Enhancement of Fire Service in the Knightdale Community

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Certification

I hereby certify that this research paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given when I have used language, ideas, expression, or writings of another.

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Abstract

Wake County Emergency Services Department has approached the Town of Knightdale Fire Department about merging the county department Eastern Wake Fire Department that serves the area around the town the with town's fire department. The problem is the Town of Knightdale and Wake County need to make an informed decision if the merger of the town fire department and Eastern Wake Fire Department will provide equal or better service to the citizens of the county and the town for less cost.

The purpose of this research is to perform an analysis to determine if there is benefit to both the town and the county to merge the two departments in to one. The descriptive research method will be used to research this problem and provide information to answer the following questions. (a) What are the costs and benefits for the Town of Knightdale and for Wake County with regard to the merger? (b) How would the merger impact the Town of Knightdale? (c) Would a merger improve the level service in the community? (d) What could be some potential long term problems or issues with a merged fire service in the Knightdale area? (e) What are the reasons that this potential merger could fail?

Procedures included a literature review, interviews with individuals involved in mergers, interviews with people involved with Wake County and Town of Knightdale Fire Departments especially on the finance end. A questionnaire to members of the county and the town fire departments. The research led the researcher to believe that a merger of the county and the town departments would have long term benefits to the town and to the county. Recommendations cover many of the steps that should occur to make the merger successful. A committee should be appointed from both the county and the town that includes personnel from all levels including finance to begin the discussion to make smooth merger occur in the next three years.

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Introduction

Wake County Deputy County Manager Joe Durham has approached the Town of Knightdale about the possibility of the town allowing the private incorporation Eastern Wake Fire Department that serves the area around the town to merge with or be consolidated into the town's fire department. Over the past 15 years Wake County has dealt with several issues with Eastern Wake Fire Department including allegations of misspent funds, poor performance, and poor leadership. The main body of the discussion concerned what would the town need for the consolidation to occur, what would the town charge the county to run the fire service in the county, and when could the town begin serving the citizens in the county. The town staff was asked to develop a proposal for the possibility of the town taking the fire service over in the county and merging the private incorporations employees, equipment, and assets into one department.

In April of 2013 Wake County Emergency Services following up on Deputy County Manager Joe Durham's request approached the Town of Knightdale and asked if the town would be interested in merging the county department that provides fire service in the area surrounding the town with the town's fire department. The problem is the Town of Knightdale and Wake County need to make an informed decision if the merger of the town fire department and Eastern Wake Fire Department will provide equal or better service to the citizens of the county and the town for less cost. The purpose of this research is to perform an analysis to determine if there is benefit to both the town and the county to merge the two departments in to one. The following questions will be answered to perform this research. (a) What are the costs and benefits for the Town of Knightdale and for Wake County with regard to the merger? (b) How would the merger

impact the Town of Knightdale? (c) Would a merger improve the level service in the community? (d) What could be some potential long term problems or issues with a merged fire service in the Knightdale area? (e) What are the reasons that this potential merger could fail? The descriptive research method will be used to research this problem and provide information to answer the questions. Survey's and interviews of departments that have gone through mergers and consolidations on their experience. Interviewing the governmental personnel to what issues or problems and advantages they foresee with a merger of this type. Survey the government and private sector as to what they believe the strengths and weakness would be after such a merger and what how to best make the merger a success.

Background and Significance

The Town of Knightdale is a town strategically located just east of Raleigh, North Carolina which is the capital city of the state. It is located 9 miles from downtown Raleigh and less than 30 minutes to the Research Triangle Park. In the last five years two major interstate highways have been constructed within the town limits Interstate 540 and US Highway 64. The town's population is 11,761 persons as of January 1, 2013 (Town of Knightdale Quick Facts 2013). The town has experienced tremendous growth over the last five years with the town growing 60% in the last 5 years. Knightdale's projected population in 2025 is to be over 39,000 persons. The town's tax base is 69% residential and 31% commercial (Town of Knightdale Quick Facts 2013).

Knightdale was incorporated in 1927 as a farming community that was built up on the Norfolk and Southern Railroad and Highway 64. The town government operates with a Mayor/ Council government. The chief officer of the town is the Town Manager who is appointed by the

Town Council and is responsible for the management of all departments within the town. The Town of Knightdale functions with eight departments; Administration, Finance, Parks & Recreation, Planning, Engineering, Public Works, Police, and the Fire Department. (About Knightdale)

The Fire Department is a combination department with full and part time firefighters, and volunteers. The department is headed by the Fire Chief that is responsible for the overall administration of the department. All of these positions have been trained to meet the North Carolina Firefighter Level II, North Carolina Haz Mat Operations, and a minimum of North Carolina Medical Responder with a few having their North Carolina EMT certification.

The day to day operations of the fire department is the responsibility of the fire chief. This position oversees the suppression, maintenance, medical service, rescue, training, and fire prevention efforts of the department including fire inspections. The fire department operates with three shifts of 24 hours. Each shift has three personnel on it one person who is the captain one is the driver and the third is the firefighter. In addition, the fire department has three part time fire inspectors, and 12 part-time fill in firefighters for a total of 25 paid firefighters. The department is supplemented with 35 volunteer firefighters for a total of 60 personnel that comprise the Knightdale Fire Department.

Until July, 2013 Knightdale operated as a hybrid Public Safety Department with approximately 20 of the town's police officers trained as firefighters and titled as Public Safety Officers. Over the last couple of years the town had been weaning themselves from the public safety concept. (Oral History)

On February 7, 1940 a major fire occurred in the downtown district of Knightdale that destroyed several businesses and homes. The fire occurred at 2:40 am calls were placed to get

the help of local citizens to form a bucket brigade and with the assistance of the City of Raleigh Fire Department many of the other businesses in town were saved. Several years later in 1953 town citizens met to determine the interest of establishing a fire department to serve the Town of Knightdale and the surrounding community. In 1954 the Knightdale Volunteer Fire Department (KVFD) was incorporated as private nonprofit incorporation. For the next 30 years the department operated by means of fundraisers until the early 1980's when a fire tax was instated for the rural area. Since the town was not a part of the fire tax area the town of began contributing funding equal to this tax rate for the property within the town limits. From the 1950's until the late 1970's the town and Knightdale Fire Department shared the same building on Hester Street part as the fire station and part as Town Hall. (Wake County Fire Department History).

In the fall of 2001 rumors surfaced and news articles reported that the KVFD was misspending money given to them through tax dollars and through citizen donations. Wake County called for an audit of the department by a CPA (Clark McNairy Financial Investigation 2001) paid for by the county. This audit found several instances of misspending and mismanagement of the KVFD. The audit alleged that the department credit card had been used for personal items, that money given to the department to buy specific equipment such as a defibrillator had been used for lights for the Chief vehicle, that employees had possibly falsified time sheets to increase their pay for hours worked and fire call response (Clark McNairy 2001). This was the second time in eight years that accusations of wrong doing had surfaced concerning the department. The Town of Knightdale had to consider whether they would continue to contract with KVFD to provide their fire service.

According to the minutes of the Council retreat on Feb. 9, 2002 and the town council meeting on March 4, 2002; Town Manager Gary McConkey gave a presentation with three options for the Town of Knightdale to consider in response to the recent audit report (Fire Service Options for the Town of Knightdale and Wake County Government 2002). The options were 1) join the Wake County Fire Tax District, 2) establish a town fire department 3) or continue to contract with the KVFD. Mr. McConkey discussed the backgrounds of these three options. With the first option, the town would relinquish control of its fire service to the county who would continue to contract with the KVFD. With this option the town would have one member on the county fire commission and with the exception of this would lose any and all control and interest it has in the fire service delivered to town residents. The second option had several avenues as a possibility for the council to consider. The town could start a public safety department with police officers being trained as PSOs and serve the town limits. The town could start a fire department and supplement the paid fire staff with public safety officers and volunteers, or they could merge with KVFD and the town staff would take over the operations of the department in particular the administrative and financial functions. The last option was to continue to have KVFD to continue to serve the town. This could be done using the current contract under the same conditions until the two year notice is served or the town could negotiate a new contract with different terms and conditions. Mr. McConkey in his report included what he saw as the criteria for the council's decision; first and foremost "the cost of the option, secondly the provision of service and thirdly the stewardship of our taxpayers' money" (Gary McConkey's notes, PowerPoint February 2002).

In an interview with the author in May, 2013 about the inception of the Town of Knightdale Public Safety Department, Mr. McConkey explained how difficult of a decision the

town was facing at that time. The auditor's report came just a few years after a scathing report he had done on KVFD and its financial operation. His belief was that though the town was not financially prepared to make the move to take over the fire service and that it would be difficult for the council to continue to contract with KVFD and be good stewards of the tax dollars they are responsible for. KVFD staffed their station with 3 people per 24 hour shift in addition to their volunteers. It was going to be difficult for the town to guarantee the three person crew without a tax increase. Therefore, in his mind the public safety concept was a perfect fit because the town already had three officers working if they were PSOs he could commit two to a fire call leaving one for police emergencies. He developed the plan for a public safety department which he sold to the council that would give the town a staffing level comparable to what KVFD was providing. His belief being was that it should have been a pure public safety department 100% PSO where the officer would come into roll call and be assigned to the station. (Gary McConkey)

In the years since the Town of Knightdale began their own fire service and broke away from contracting with the private corporation Wake County has continued to deal with issues with Eastern Wake Fire Department. This culminated in December of 2011 when the county took over the finances of the department and appointed three of the members of the Departments Board of Directors. This was done after a dispute between the county and the department regarding \$87,000 in salaries paid to the Chief and three other employees that the county felt was not justified. (Specht, Paul December 3, 2011) The continuation of these types of problems apparently made Wake County to consider approaching the Town of Knightdale to take over the fire service in the area around Knightdale.

Additionally Wake County has expressed an interest in consolidation or merging all of the private incorporations into the municipal fire departments. The county fire budget will be operating at a deficit starting in fiscal year 2014 with a \$13,000 deficit growing to \$500,000 in 2019. Deputy Wake County Manager Joe Durham says “the current fire tax district budget is unsustainable”. Over the past 10 years municipal fire departments have expanded their service areas- thereby shrinking the service areas of the private incorporations that serve the unincorporated areas of the county. Compounding the loss in revenues the cost of running the private incorporated departments especially personnel expenses has grown. County Commissioners say that mergers and consolidation of services is the best answer as they are not going to raise property taxes. (News and Observer, February 09, 2012).

The potential of a consolidation of the fire service between the Town of Knightdale and Eastern Wake Fire Department would allow the departments to assist the United States Fire Administration in accomplishing two of their goals and ultimately the goals of the local departments. First of all it will improve local planning and preparedness within the Knightdale Community. With duplication of service and service overlap the fire service is not as efficient as it could be on everything from response to prevention. A unified department in the area would allow better planning for and preparedness for all types of incidents and disasters from the medical call at the local nursing home to the two alarm apartment fire on up to the response and recovery from the Atlantic Hurricanes that occasionally come ashore in North Carolina and making the 100 mile trek inland to Wake County and wreaking widespread havoc. Additionally the enhancement of the fire service in the Knightdale Community will help the USFA and the Knightdale communities improve the fire and emergency services professional status. As discussed earlier Eastern Wake’s problems have affected the community’s image of the

incorporations professional status and has had repercussions on all fire departments in the Wake County area. Unfortunately one negative article about one particular department can have far reaching effects to many other departments. The enhancement of the fire service in the Knightdale community will also allow the firefighters of Eastern Wake Fire Department to develop professionally to meet the standards that Knightdale Fire Department requires.

If the two government entities choose to move forward with the enhancement of fire service it will require strong leadership from the leaders of both departments to make it a success from the planning phase right through several years of operation as one entity rather than two. In the Executive Leadership class of the Executive Fire Officer program discussions and lessons were taught that will assist in the leadership to get this accomplished. The enhancement of fire services in the Knightdale community should provide greater depth of service through improving response capability, response efficiency, and exercising leadership to create the adaptive and technical changes required.

To accomplish the merger of these two departments many of the lessons discussed and learned in the EFO Executive Leadership course will be used. The decision to merge the two departments will involve gaining support from two political boards the Knightdale Town Council and the Wake County Commissioners. To accomplish this, the leaders will have to think politically as discussed in Executive Leadership. Understanding the political relationships between the parties involved and the political groups and more importantly the stakeholders (the citizens served) in leading this change. Additionally leading through the politics and the policy that will be developed is another lesson from Executive Leadership that can assist in the merger of these two departments. There will be different groups with different interest that will need to be identified and determine what influence they will have and then to develop the policies that

will achieve the desired outcome much the same way that Hamilton, Madison, and Jay developed to merge the colonies into one union.

Internal influence along with external influence will play a role in the success of the merger of the departments. As discussed in Executive Leadership those within the both organizations will need to be steered to shown the positive aspects of a merger. This could prove to be difficult as most people are naturally suspicious of change. This can be accomplished through building relationships through networking, negotiating, influencing, and persuading. The external influence would include persuading the external stakeholders in the overall benefits of a merger. Obviously as learned in Executive Leadership to make a change involves taking risk. Through the transition it will take strong leadership to keep what will be even a larger ship on a steady and clear path to reach the final objective of enhancing the fire service in the Knightdale community.

Literature Review

The literature review included reviewing books, publications, studies, news articles, and EFO papers. Businesses and corporations have been merging, consolidating, and doing acquisitions to improve the overall economic standing of the businesses involved and the industries. For example if you look at the airline industry through the years there has been many mergers and consolidations amongst airlines to make the airlines stronger and more importantly to allow them to serve their customers more efficiently and at a better cost especially as fuel prices have sky rocketed.

Why would two or more departments want to merge? In the publication “A Systematic Approach to Fire Service Consolidation and Merger ICMA” from Geocities says that “Systems

exist immediately adjacent to one another, each with a complete, and many times, duplicated set of resources.” It goes on to say that the goal of consolidation should be “To eliminate (wasteful or unneeded) duplication of physical plant, manpower, apparatus, equipment, political, and fiscal resources.”

Stephanie Thompson in Spotting a Trend: Fire Department Consolidation discusses the benefits of consolidation. Below is a list of the potential benefits that she believes is possible:

- * Lower apparatus replacement requirements - Larger departments need fewer pieces of reserve apparatus for an equal number of frontline rigs. Consolidation also reduces the expensive duplication of specialized apparatus like aerials and hazmat units.
- * Enhanced career opportunities - Although the number of people at the topmost echelons is reduced, the organization as a whole is larger, which means that someone is always retiring or moving elsewhere. With this steady overall turnover, bright young officers have greater opportunity for advancement.
- * Joint training facilities
- * Specialization of various functions - smaller departments can't afford full time training and code enforcement officers
- * Consolidation of pension resources
- * ISO rating improvements
- * Cost reductions through volume purchasing
- * Fewer fire stations because of larger scale planning
- * Faster response time
- * More efficient personnel allocation
- * Increased levels of service for the same dollars spent
- * Regionalized public information and education programs
- * Consistent system-wide code requirements
- * Elimination of redundancy, resulting in cost savings

* Better future use of resources and reorganization.

The article Merging Fire Services a Hot Potato they discuss the merger of a municipal department and a county department and the advantages it would have. “Combining the city fire department with Metro operationally makes sense, but it comes down to the costs of delivering a quality service and also what happens to the employees of both parties,” Parker said. “We are going to apply for [state] Economic Vitality Incentive Program funds to possibly fund a feasibility study of the potential merger/affiliation/contract for service.” And while there is potential; savings of up to \$500,000 there is not a wholesale buy in to the merger. The city Fire Chief has concerns about the marriage of his highly trained personnel with the Metro Department, the condition of Metro’s apparatus and equipment, the inspection issues in the Metro area to name a few. (H.Lovy)

In a Financial Management Magazine they have an article geared towards corporations but the same rules would apply in the merger of fire services. The article titled “8 Ways to Integrate a Merger Successfully says proper planning and preparation will prevent a poor outcome and using the 8 steps they say you need to follow will help you in a successful merger. These 8 steps are (1) Set realistic expectations- don’t talk up the benefits of a merger or acquisition just to justify it. (2) Make a detailed plan. Do your due diligence- identify the key issues and strategic aims, (3) Pre mortem your deal- Think about what could go wrong and plan ahead as to what you will do. (4) Resource it properly- To manage the merger is a big job often for an individual who has other responsibilities. Give the lead to someone who has a lot of experience and give that person enough help to get the job done right. (5) Focus on best in class- within the various areas of the service provided by the departments go with the ones who perform the best, (6) Get the back office functions right- one of the most important aspects of a

merged department will be getting the finances together and the accounting working together.

(7) Communicate a lot- with a merger there can be a lot of uncertainty and the best way to keep half-truths and false rumors from flying is to communicate with all involved to keep people from becoming jittery. (8) Deliver quick wins- as the merger progresses accentuate the positive that the merger has accomplished (R. Young).

In the book titled *Fire Department Consolidation- Why & How to Do It...Right* it opens up with a quote paraphrased from Peter Drucker. "Leadership is the astute application of common sense." The publication goes on to say that "merger and consolidation within the fire service can occur for a variety of reasons. Consolidation can be a viable option which should be looked upon as a beneficial alternative to enable improved use of scarce resources, flexibility of staff, equipment and dollars, stronger internal programs, and increased opportunities to expand services and/or specialize. Consolidation can provide for an expanded tax base and reduce redundancy in apparatus, personnel and equipment, and the planning process itself can identify areas for savings not foreseen at the outset. It eliminates property and tax conflicts and providing more efficient application of available resources and can enable the closure of stations or other duplicated facilities and services. Consolidation can lower apparatus replacement requirements, reduce the number of reserve pieces required and eliminate duplication of specialty apparatus. Additional cost reductions can be realized through volume purchasing as well as through combined equipment planning and maintenance. Thomas speaks of many fire departments turning to a variety of joint ventures to provide service to their communities while conserving their funding and resources. These departments are "using a variety of approaches, ranging from informal sharing of individual personnel or equipment to the formal consolidation of departments across jurisdictional lines". (J. Thomas)

Thomas goes on to describe the different types of fire department consolidations that can occur. The first one is a functional consolidation where the departments generally function independently with the exception of one or two duties that are shared by both departments for example a joint training center. A partial consolidation is another type of fire department consolidation. With a partial consolidation the separation of the fire departments continues but an agreement is made between the departments to work through a challenge that impacts both departments. For example two departments share the cost of staffing a station that serves two or more jurisdictions. Or as described in the Efficient Government article titled Fire Department Consolidation Study the University Heights and Shaker Heights, Ohio fire departments recently proposed a merger between both cities local firefighters unions to reduce the cost of emergency services for taxpayers. The third type of consolidation is an operational consolidation which often is called a merger. In an operational consolidation separate fire departments are combined into one department. This one new department then serves the response areas of what were once the two jurisdictions. Most often to accomplish this it has to be done through legal agreements through all parties and jurisdictions involved.

The Efficient Government article titled “Fire Department Consolidation Study” discussed the three methodologies covered by Thomas calling them functional, operational, and legal unification of emergency resources. They warned that with each strategy there could be problems which could have a negative impact on the potential savings and operations and making the merger inefficient. These issues can come from the following:

- Command: Leadership in emergency services from both cities must agree upon policies and guidelines to ensure consistency and enforcement at all levels. Miscommunication within management can lead to conflict that reduces the program’s benefits.

- Communication: Bringing together two emergency services requires transparent channels of communication to ensure all new plans are understood by both entities. Disjointed dissemination of information can lead to costly delays or oversights.
- Control: Each emergency department has its own hierarchy in place, but leaders must collaborate on a hybrid system for oversight and leadership. New roles must be created while others are eliminated to meet the needs of the new force.
- Culture: The newly merged emergency services must develop policies to encourage socialization and camaraderie. Collaboration is enhanced when two joining organizations create a close relationship.

In the research there is a recurring theme as to what needs to occur for a successful merger. In a Fire Chief magazine article titled “Strength in Numbers” J. Wiedner discussed how important it is to have public involvement in the merger as these are the people that will benefit from the merger. Another important element is rumor control. False information can come from a number of sources including members of the committee that is working on the merger. To combat this, a Public Information Officer or Communications Officer should be appointed from the committee and all information concerning the merger should go through this individual. Additionally this Communications Officer should be communicating with the local media as to how the discussions are proceeding. This will serve as a way to keep the community informed and ultimately involved. Lastly the article discusses how important communications is in the process. A breakdown in communications between the committee and fire department personnel will slow down the process and will also have a negative impact on the credibility of the work the committee is doing.

A merger or consolidation process is not an overnight event. Much time, effort, and work must go into the process. In the steps to make a merger happen talks may begin and then break off before picking up again. Such was the case when Melvindale and Dearborn, Michigan Fire Departments met to discuss a merger. Their talks began in 2010 and “sputtered” picking up again in 2012 where they were successful in reaching an agreement that both municipalities felt would be beneficial to them. (J. Slezak)

In the EFO paper Merging Fire Departments Henning discusses several reasons that fire department mergers fail. His research showed that the central theme or the reason for these failures – Lack of Leadership. He gave an example of one department that took the two former Chiefs from each department one that was strong in Operations and the other strong in Administration. Within the new organization the one with the strength in Administration was made the Chief and the one strong in Operations was made the Assistant Chief. As time went on each Chief was afraid to step in and address issues that they felt the other should handle. This eventually ended up leading to conflicts and failures as many problems and issues were left unattended. Henning also gave an example of a department that had been formed after two departments had merged. As two independent departments the departments had a respectable ISO Insurance Services Office rating. After the consolidation and closing stations and adjusting the staffing of the department the department received a score lower than the ISO grade the two departments had previously earned which ended up raising the insurance rates nearly double for the homeowners in the community. A third negative impact mentioned in the paper was two merged departments that had Paramedic service. State pension laws did not give the Firefighter Paramedic’s credit for their time already served as Paramedics under the former organization. This was an issue brought up during the talks between the departments but was never settled and

was an important issue for the personnel. When the departments merged this open wound that was not dealt with festered causing problems for the newly consolidated department.

Chief Peter Bryan retired with experience in several departments and a couple of mergers wrote in an article for Fire Engineering the steps he believes you must take to make a merger successful. The following is a summary of those steps and as Chief Bryan says not necessarily in this order.

Step 1: Form a planning or steering committee or task force if you would like to call it that has a specific purpose in the merger talks. This should include management, fire personnel, and where a Union is involved representation from the Union.

Step 2: These people must attend all the meetings and represent all the stakeholders. The public should be represented by one of the Chief Officers. Develop a timeline and meet regularly to discuss and make the appropriate decisions. Determine the task to be completed by the committee. Vote on a chairperson or co-chairpersons that may be from both agencies. The committee should at some point move into transition meetings not for making merger decisions but for scheduling the timing of the merger steps to be completed prior to the merger taking place.

Step 3: As decisions are made begin implementing them as soon as practical. Remember that some task will be dependent on other task being completed first. Be cognizant that once you begin a task you may have to revise it or tweak it. More tasks may be identified as you work through the task and additional task may be identified.

Step 4: Communicate sharing information as the merger moves along. If you don't keep the firefighters informed and give them information than you will find the firefighters making up their own information that may not be factual. Don't forget the citizens that the departments

serve and keep them informed. Additionally keep the management and the elected officials in the loop as to what is going on. Cover the bad with the good especially where service levels will be affected. Chief Bryan also suggests making or coming up with a slogan for the merger.

Step 5: Again this is not in order but one of the most important issues according to Chief Bryan is personnel issues. Will there be a change in personnel? Will pay and benefits change? Will all personnel be incorporated into the change? Will some personnel have to be offered employment in another department? These can be some of the most difficult issues and questions.

Step 6: "Change does not come without cost." What would the initial years cost be and what would the cost through the years be? Will there be initial one time startup cost? Who will make the fiscal decisions?

Step 7: One of the toughest task will be dealing with the operational issues. Let everyone within the departments give input on the operational task and help brainstorm these issues. Some of these issues are training, personnel development, and orientation.

Step 8: Training will be such an important aspect of the merger for the newly consolidated department to reach its potential. Chief Bryan suggests using the "academy" approach to the training issues which can be effective in the change process.

Change in the fire service is not easy and change in an organization especially when it affects personnel. "Change in an organization is not easy, especially when it affects our personnel. We may not have a choice in the change, just how we implement it. If change is inevitable for your department, then implementing it effectively and producing a successful outcome may be something you need to embrace, as difficult as it is."

With a merger the number of on duty staffing could increase. Staffing is one arena of the fire service that is crucial. The community has certain expectations for the level of service that cannot be met without adequate staffing. With a merged or combined department you can achieve what the community expects because you have more manpower to achieve it with. (Fire Chiefs Handbook 7-8).

As part of the process the validity of continuing to staff two stations less than 8/10ths of a mile may need to be addresses. In an article titled "Fire Department Explore Consolidations" Robert Brady the state Department of Economic and Community Development's expert on firefighting and emergency medical services (EMS) in the commonwealth of Pennsylvania talks about how more fire departments are merging to meet the two biggest stresses today on the fire service financial strains and manpower needs. To address these problems departments are merging to eliminate costly redundant service. Mr. Brady says "This is not about closing fire houses. It is about towns and firefighters deciding, 'What model can we use to make our communities safer and our departments more efficient? Everyone has to "look at the big picture," Brady said. "Most of the groups that I deal with do that. They are looking ahead, five years, 10 years or more." (P. Golias)

Through several of the literature articles discussions about how important the leadership of the merged or consolidated departments can be in the success of putting two departments together such as Eastern Wake Fire Department and Knightdale Fire Department. The literature covered not just the way to succeed in mergers in the emergency services but also the way mergers and consolidations are successful in the private sector and business world.

Literature Review Summary

The literature review showed several opportunities to make an enhancement of the fire service in the Knightdale community a success. The review showed that communities have a certain expectation for the level of service they should have and how efficient this level of service should be. Further the review showed that departments should operate without redundancy in the service they provide whether it is coverage area, staffing, equipment etc. such as Mr. Brady spoke of.

Further the literature review talks about how change can affect an organization and how to manage a merger the leadership of the departments must plan and organize the merger plan. The review gave several examples of the steps that departments must go through to make a merger successful and also what negative things could cause the merger or consolidation to fail such as Chief Bryan and the Efficient Government articles and EFO papers spoke of.

Procedures.

The applied research project was designed using the descriptive research method. This method was used in order to address the problem that the Town of Knightdale has been approached and needs to make a decision as to whether they should allow Eastern Wake Fire Department to merge with the town's fire department and this merger be a benefit for both the town and the county. The procedure used for this research included literature review, questionnaires, interviews, and analysis of cost and expenses in the operations of the two fire departments.

The first question to be researched is what are the cost and benefits for the Town of Knightdale and for Wake County with regard to the merger? To address this, question were

asked and interviews were conducted with the Town of Knightdale's Finance Director James Overton, Town of Knightdale's Accounting Manager Joanna Gombatz along with Wake County Budget and Policy Analyst Chad Balke. (See Appendix A Questions to Finance) Additionally an evaluation was made on how the two departments are overlapping in service. This was done through an evaluation of responses and response times.

The second question was how would the merger impact the Town of Knightdale? Research was conducted through a questionnaire sent to Knightdale Firefighters (see Appendix C Questions to Firefighters), an interview with Vernon Ward who works as a Ratings Inspector with the North Carolina Department of Insurance in the Ratings and Inspections Division. The Ratings and Inspections Division perform the Insurance Services Office inspections and ratings of fire departments in North Carolina with populations of less than 100,000 people.

Would a merger improve the level of service in the Knightdale Community was the third question. Again interviews were conducted with leadership of the Eastern Wake Fire Department Chief M.J. Johnson and Board Member Troy Mitchell, leadership within the Town of Knightdale Volunteer Assistant Chief Adam Stanley, and with Demetric Potts the Wake County Fire and Emergency Services Manager.

Additionally this question was specifically asked in a survey given to firefighters on both the Eastern Wake and Knightdale Fire Departments. The survey was returned by 10 firefighters from Eastern Wake and 10 from Knightdale of the 30 total that was given out.

The fourth question what could be some potential long term problems or issues with a merged fire service in the Knightdale area? To research this question the literature review was used to find out the problems and issues that other merged or consolidated departments would have. Additionally interviews were conducted of the leaders of other departments in Wake

County and the surrounding area to learn what the problems and issues were that they encountered that Knightdale could see. These interviews include Chief Ron Early with Wake Forest Fire Department who led their merger with Falls Fire Department, Chief David Cates with Western Wake Fire Department who led the merger of that department with YRAC Fire Department, Garland Tant with Eastern Wake EMS who led the merger of four EMS Departments (Knightdale, Rolesville, Wendell, Zebulon) into what is now Eastern Wake Fire Department. (See Appendix B Questions to Leaders of Merged Departments)

What are the reasons that this potential merger could fail? To keep from failing learning from other's mistakes will help the researcher to understand how to plan not for failure. To accomplish this research looking through the literature review and interviewing leaders who were part of a failed merger and asking questions of Vernon Ward on the failures he has seen in fire department mergers and consolidation.

Limitations and Assumptions

Obviously one of the biggest limitations in researching a merger or consolidation of two departments would be that no two departments are alike. And while one can research and evaluate the merger of two department's even departments that are within the Wake County area there can be differences in the people and operations of the departments in comparison to Knightdale. And while there are quite a few department mergers to consider and evaluate interestingly enough the researcher could not locate a merger occurring where a municipal department was merging with a private incorporation.

Another limitation would be the honesty that people would give in their answers to the questions posed specifically the answers by the firefighters but also the other parties involved. Everyone has biases and within two organizations such as Eastern Wake Fire and the Town of

Knightdale individuals may have their opinions as to whether a merger should occur or not and this bias sway their answers.

Results

To address the first question what are the costs and benefits for the Town of Knightdale and for Wake County with regard to the merger the researcher contacted the Finance Director for the Town of Knightdale James Overton and Town of Knightdale's Accounting Manager Joanna Gombatz along with Wake County Budget and Policy Analyst Chad Balke. The 2014 annual budgets for Eastern Wake Fire Department and for the Town of Knightdale Fire Department were received. (Appendix D Eastern Wake Fire and Knightdale Fire 2014 Budget Comparison)

Working with Joanna Gombatz a list was determined as to what the one time start up cost would be to merge the two departments. This list was based on interviews with Eastern Wake Management and determining what it would take to make the Eastern Wake stations and operations comparable to the Town of Knightdale operations. In the literature research it was noted that there should be no discrepancy between the stations, equipment etc. when the operation becomes one department. With Ms. Gombatz help the total implementation cost would be \$352,000 recurring expenditures that would be part of the budget from Appendix D would be \$320,000. (See appendix E for these expenses)

In conversations with the financial representatives questions were raised about potential savings with a merged department. One area that was brought out was the duplications of service in the old part of town in Knightdale where both an Eastern Wake unit and a Town of Knightdale unit are dispatched with the closest station response. The Town of Knightdale's main station and Eastern Wake's Station 2 which sits in the heart of old town are just 8/10ths a mile apart. This results in approximately 300 medical calls a year where two units are responding one from the

town and one from the county. With a merged department would save fuel and repairs on apparatus where one apparatus would go instead of two. (See Appendix F Map of Response Areas)

The conversations about the closest station response brought up another potential cost savings. With the close proximity of the two stations could the older county station Eastern Wake Station 2 be closed or at least be unmanned and run as a volunteer station? An evaluation of the amount of difference in time was looked at for the past 25 calls.

Response Times

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>EWFD</u>	<u>KFD</u>
04-22-13	Smithfield Road	5 min	3 min
04-24-13	Cinder St.	7 min	6 min
04-27-13	Switchback St.	6 min	6 min
04-28-13	Smithfield Road	5 min	5 min
05-01-13	Hester Street	2 min	3 min
05-02-13	Tortola Place	5 min	5 min
05-06-13	Park Ave.	4 min	3 min
05-07-13	Second Ave.	4 min	4 min
05-09-13	Smithfield Road	3 min	3 min
05-13-13	First Ave.	3 min	3 min
05-14-13	Main Street	4 min	4 min
05-14-13	Ridge Street	3 min	4 min
05-14-13	Carrington Dr.	4 min	3 min
05-17-13	Switchback St.	3 min	5 min
05-20-13	Park Ave.	4 min	4 min
05-22-13	Bethlehem Road	4 min	4 min
05-23-13	Main St.	4 min	4 min
05-25-13	Flowers Street	3 min	3 min
05-27-13	Winning Colors	7 min	8 min
05-28-13	Railroad St.	5 min	4 min
05-30-13	Adair Lane	5 min	3 min
06-02-13	Fourth Ave.	3 min	4 min
06-02-13	Main St.	5 min	4 min
06-07-13	Park Ave.	3 min	3 min
06-07-13	Bethlehem Road	3 min	3 min

In the interview with Demetric Potts he was asked about whether the county would entertain the possibility of not staffing Eastern Wake Station 2. Mr. Potts felt that there was a potential for the unmanning of this station and not have an adverse effect on service to the county residents. In the conversations with Mr. Potts the discussion turned to the potential of saving manpower cost with the closing of this station. Mr. Balke the Wake County Budget analyst also sees potential savings in not staffing Eastern Wake Station 2.

The affect the merger of the two departments would have on the Town of Knightdale question was asked in several interviews. Mr. Overton was asked what the impact would have on the town financially. His concerns were about the long term capital cost that the town would face. He felt that the age of Eastern Wake's fire station would mean in a few years the town would spend money in remodeling and upgrading these facilities. Also Mr. Overton would like to know how the future percentages of the fire department budget would be divided between the town and the county. His example (from Appendix D) was today if they were combined the total budget would be 2.6 million dollars with the county putting in 1.6 million and the town 1.0 million or a 60-40 split. What would this be tied to? Population- the town today has a population of 12,000 and Eastern Wake Fire serves 18,000 in the county. Or would it be tied to number of fire calls responded to in the county and the town which is 50-50. Or would you tie it to the number of square miles served which could be as little as 80- 20 split with the town having the smaller percentage. Mr. Overton felt that whatever the long term plan is as to how the cost of the fire service in the merger it would need to be where it would not have a negative effect on the town.

Ron Early Chief of Wake Forest Fire Department in the interview with him complained about how now that he was in the second year of the merged department and the county was

wanting to cut the funding regarding the merged area over 10%. Unfortunately his contract with the county is not tied to a specific measure and thus is has having to battle with the county to maintain the funding to operate the station as he has been. He warned to be cautious in having an open ended agreement in the way the county provides their funding.

Eastern Wake EMS Chief Garland Tant advised that the biggest long term task and the hidden cost that he dealt with was working through the dissolution of the EMS Departments that had merged together. Working through the dissolution with the North Carolina Department of State and with the Internal Revenue Service proved to add an additional workload and cost in that it took him and attorneys approximately 18 months to dissolve the 5 departments. This phase and even the agreements drawn up between the town and the county could have long term affects and hidden cost with regards to the legal issues that it would take to make a merger a reality.

The merger of Pinecroft-Sedgefield and Jamestown Fire Departments was oddly enough the opposite of what Knightdale and Eastern Wake are looking at. Chief Vernon Ward was the Chief of Pinecroft-Sedgefield a private incorporation when the Town of Jamestown asked that they consider merging the municipal department with the private incorporation. The long term issue that Pinecroft- Sedgefield dealt with was the morale of the merged department employees who were not sold on the merger. The negativity from this group has a negative impact on all employees.

Results of the research question would a merger improve the level service in the community were answered in several ways. First a questionnaire was asked of the members of both departments. (Appendix C) Of the 20 members surveyed 16 of them felt that the merger would be beneficial to the community. The members felt that it would be beneficial as the Town

of Knightdale has stronger training requirements than Eastern Wake Fire Department so in a merger the personnel there would train to bring themselves up to the Knightdale training with being an EMT response department, a North Carolina Technical Rescue VMR department.

Further in the questionnaires with the firefighters especially with the firefighters from Eastern Wake Fire Department the members believed that the merger would benefit the fire service in the community though they were not convinced of how great it would be. Several of the members spoke of their concerns about the changes that would come and would they be qualified when the time came for them to become employees of the town if the merger happened. This concern was from the difference between the minimum qualifications of the two departments and whether they as an officer with the county department would maintain their rank with the merged town department after the merge. In the book *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership* this concept was covered. (Heifetz, Grashow, Linsky) These firefighters were concerned about their potential losses as stakeholders in the potential merger. The potential losses that they felt could affect them included comfort- where they are with their employer, security- the time they have in and the threat of losing their jobs, time- the time they have with the county department versus starting new with the town, money- if they do not qualify for the rank they have with the county then they will lose money, power- no longer holding the rank they presently have and the power that goes with it, control- in the private corporation they feel like they control their fate more than with the town and its human resources department, job- some felt they could lose their jobs as firefighters if the town and county merged, life- with their perception that they could not be hired by the town, or lose their rank that it would have a negative effect on their lives. Many made statements about how the potential for change concerned or worried them.

In the questionnaire to members of Eastern Wake it was asked what the difference between a merger and consolidation was by a couple of the respondents? One respondent asked the difference between a merger, a consolidation, and an acquisition? In researching the definitions of these three words using Webster's New College Dictionary the following definitions were found. Merger- the union of two or more commercial interest or corporations. The word merge means to cause to be united or gradually absorbed in stages. The word consolidation is the act or process of consolidating, merger of two of more commercial interests or incorporations. Consolidate means to unite into one system or body, to make stable or strong. The word acquisition means the act of acquiring, something acquired. Acquire means to gain possession of, to get by one's own efforts, to gain by experience.

The interviews with the management of Eastern Wake Fire and with Mr. Potts with Wake County showed that they believed the merger would improve the level of service in the community as many of the members of Eastern Wake Fire Department are "dying for leadership". With all the problems and issues that the department has experienced through the years the morale in the fire department is down considerably which has had a negative effect on the departments operations.

In the interview with Adam Stanley who serves as the Training Officer with Knightdale Fire felt that the merger would be beneficial for both departments in their fire ground operations. With the close proximity of the two departments they run calls together daily. Mr. Stanley said that while the departments train together frequently it would improve the level of service with the merged department as the personnel would train more frequently together, the departments would work off of the same fire ground SOG's.

Stanley also talked of how the level of service within the town would improve as presently the department responds with one paid crew and relies on volunteers for second duty crews. With the merged department and the additional staffing and station there would be a faster response on second duty calls.

What could be some potential long term problems or issues with a merged fire service in the Knightdale area? The results of this question were answered by speaking with the Chiefs of merged departments and by the literature review. In the interviews with Chief Cates, Chief Early, Chief Tant and Chief Ward are the blending of the two department personnel. Several talked about how some members from the merged department feel that they are not valued the same as members from the main department administration. This can be combatted by treating all the members of both departments the same. Also the interviews and literature reviews covered how important it is to merge some of the history into the new department. Chief Ward gave as an example that the merged department should develop a new patch that incorporates parts of both departments patch into it.

Again Chief Early and Mr. Overton discussed how important it will be to have a plan or agreement between the Town of Knightdale and Wake County as to how the cost of the fire service in the Knightdale community should be fairly and equitably distributed between the town and the county. If this is not done upfront long term it could come back and bite the town and her taxpayers.

In the interviews with Mr. Overton and Mr. Potts comments were raised about how capital purchases such as fire apparatus, air packs etc. should be handled fairly. Mr. Potts said that in their contracts with other municipalities that serve county area's the cost of say engines are divided by the percentage of the fire departments budget the county and the municipality pay

into it. Mr. Potts went on to say that the county would pay 100% of a tanker that the town tax payers should not pay for that apparatus as it would not be used in the town. Conversely the county will not pay anything towards a ladder truck as that is a municipality responsibility and county taxpayers should not be responsible for that.

In the interview with Chief Ward who does ISO grading for the North Carolina Department of Insurance he talked of how with the increase in department call volume and the increased response area it could have a potential negative impact on the town's ISO grade. Presently the Town of Knightdale is a Class 5 Department and Eastern Wake Fire Department is a Class 6. In discussing the town's operations he felt that the merger of the two departments would not have a negative impact but a positive one. Chief Ward also said that once the departments were merged that the Department of Insurance would come in and do a grading a year after the merger. Chief Ward with his experience gave the following list of questions that the departments might need to answer as they move through this process. Not all the questions would apply to the process but they would stimulate thought in those arenas.

Legal Considerations

- Are there any local ordinances that might affect an agreement for intergovernmental services?
- Have you considered procedures or requirements for the hiring, release or change of status of personnel affected by the agreement?
- What about issues including liability, damages, allowable overhead cost, equipment and property disposition at the termination of the agreement?
- Are there procedures for the amending and monitoring the agreement?
- Under what conditions or circumstances can the agreement be terminated?
- Does the proposed activity require the review and/or approval by another local or state agency?

Cost

- What are the personnel, operating and capital costs of the service to be provided?
- What provisions should be made to accommodate inflationary cost?
- What administrative costs should be part of the “cost of services”?
- What is an acceptable method of determining cost and payments?
- Is it really cost-effective to join with other governmental units to provide the service? If the cost is higher than present, is the service level improved sufficiently to justify the joint effort?

Public Reaction and Policy Issues

- What will be the public reaction to the agreement in both the provider and recipient jurisdictions?
- How will you deal with the residents who object to services being provided by a different agency?
- To which jurisdiction would citizens complain about the service – the provider or the recipient? How will complaints be addressed?
- Do the participating jurisdictions understand that the provider may have to assume some policy control over the service?
- What problems may arise during the transition from an independent to an intergovernmental provision of service? Is there a mechanism to resolve the issues?
- How will the intergovernmental provision of services affect local businesses?
- Is it necessary to make provisions to accommodate additional members?

Assessing Resources

- What changes might be needed to provide the service, including personnel, facilities, equipment organizational or structural arrangements and fiscal procedures?
- Does the potential provider of the service have the capacity to provide the service at the anticipated level of service?
- Will the present recipients of the service be short-changed?

- What impact will the intergovernmental agreement have on current staff?
- Can present personnel and facilities be reallocated? Relocated?
- Will the salaries of personnel be affected by the arrangement?

The last question what are the reasons that this potential merger could fail? As noted in the Fire Chief Article Strength in Numbers Chiefs Ward and Tant talked about the negative impact rumors in particular false rumors have can have on the success of the merger. False information can get at the heart of the department and affect the morale of the merged department.

In the interview with Chief Ward if the merger had a negative impact on the town's ISO grade the town would probably look at the future of continuing the merger. Chief Early shared a Management Practices Assessment that he felt helped in addressing any issues and questions that could come up prior to the merger and established a timeline to address them. This included policies, procedures, personnel, services, training. (Appendix G: Falls and Wake Forest Merger Management Practice Assessment)

In the interviews with all the Chiefs the success of the merger is dependent on the people and the leaders of the departments. Chief Johnson in the interview spoke of how he would support the Chief if the merger happens and work to make one department of two. A failure of the leaders to be 100% behind the merger can lead to problems and maybe even failure.

In the interviews with the finance people Mr. Overton and Mr. Balke both believed that the failure to show long term cost savings to both entities would cause a reevaluation of the merger. Additionally both gentleman believed that while an initial start-up cost would be expected to merge the departments it would need to be a realistic figure and not give the appearance that one department is attempting to take advantage of the merger.

Chief Ward addressed many of the questions posed in the interview with him. His experience with the Pinecroft-Sedgefield and Jamestown merger led him to develop a matrix for merging fire departments. In the years since that merger and in his position as an ISO Grader for the North Carolina Department of Insurance he has been involved in grading and evaluating departments that have merged. These experiences have led him to further develop his merger matrix. He says “the purpose of his matrix is to assist departments in studying the feasibility of merging two or more departments. The matrix is to assist the department in looking into every aspect of the department. This should help This should help departments see what the merged department could look like if they combined all resources.” The matrix asked you to compare what each department looks like now and to come to an agreement as to what the merged department would look like.

The matrix includes an organizational overview including command, finance and demographics. A management component that includes mission and vision statements, the standard operating procedures, critical issues, communications. Planning for fire and emergency medical protection is the next phase including organizing. The very important personnel management with policies, compensation, disciplinary process, recruiting, hiring and testing process. Staffing including administration, career and volunteer staff. Capital improvement including stations, apparatus, and equipment. The delivery system including the number of stations, the staffing levels, apparatus, and a risk analysis. Training including facilities, recordkeeping, training goals and objectives. Lastly fire prevention including public education, investigations, statistical analysis. (Appendix H: Fire Department Merger Matrix)

Additionally Chief Ward talked about the legal requirements necessary for a successful merger. As Chief Tant had spoken of working through the process can be an exhaustive chore. Chief Ward went over what the requirements would be for merging two or more departments together. The

items he felt would need to be done are:

- Determine that the physical locations of the two fire stations are within 10 miles of each other.
- File Articles of Merger with Secretary of State when applicable.
- Submit new charter or amended charter with Secretary of State when applicable.
- If there is a name change with the merged departments the newly created department will have to reapply for a new tax ID number.
- Dissolve the Tax ID number of the department that will no longer be operating.
- Dissolve charter of the department that will no longer be operating.
- A new map will have to be developed merging the two fire insurance districts together and have the maps approved by the county commissioners. The county Fire Marshal's office should develop the map and have it approved by DOI before getting the commissioners approval.
- If there is tax districts (GS 69.25 and/or GS 153A-300) involved that issue will need to be addressed by the County Board of Commissioners.
- A new contract will need to be written for the merged district.
- The merged department shall have sufficient personnel, which is 20 personnel for the main station and 8 additional personnel for each substation.
- A new roster will have to be submitted to the Fireman's Association merging all personnel into the roster of the newly created department.
- The newly created department will have to add all the personnel on the worker comp roster.
- The department will have to transfer title of equipment and property and assure the equipment is insured.
- If name changed occurred the department will need to look at all the current contracts that they have in place have them updated with the name of the new department and new department official signatures.
- Once the merger is completed the Department of Insurance will conduct a 9S inspection on the department.
- When the 9S inspection is completed the department will be contacted by someone from DOI concerning their relief fund. The relief fund money of the dissolved department will then be

transferred to the newly created department and be handled by the relief fund board of the new department

- If there is equipment that has been purchased through the NCDOI Grant Funds for either department that equipment will transfer to the newly created department.

Discussion

“True conclusions can only be reached, or approached, by pursuing the truth without regarding to where it may lead or what its effect may be on different interests.” This is a quote from the Geocities article Fire Department Consolidation. In the article they go on to say “the information from this research should be used by administrators in decision-making. It is not intended to present any solution, but present in one format the major considerations that should be weighed. The intent is only to discuss needs, option, etc., and not to debate the merits or implementation of any particular plan or idea. The goal is simply to find out, on the basis of the information provided, where there is any objective opposition to taking the feasibility to the next step”. This is a true statement that the research should not be conducted to determine how or when an enhancement of the fire service in the Knightdale area should occur but should be used in the decision making process by the Town of Knightdale and by Wake County as to what is the next logical step for each of these entities in this endeavor.

As the emergency services in Wake County are continued to be challenged to find ways to expand their services and to do so economically they will at look at finding ways to consolidate departments to get more bang for their budgets. Wake County is continuing to see a growth in need for service as the percent of the unincorporated area in the county shrinks. In 1990 the unincorporated area made up 81% of the county in 2012 it was down to 64%. During

this time the population of the county rose 44% but in the unincorporated area rose just 9%. And while the area and population of the unincorporated area diminishes the expectations for levels of service actually risen. This is resulting in Wake County estimating a budget deficit in the fire service of \$161,000 in 2014 and \$339,000 in 2015 and continuing to rise after that. The County Commissioners have committed to no new taxes and so the fire service of Wake County must develop ways to make their service more efficient and save money in the delivery of fire service. One way that has been addressed to accomplish this goal is through mergers and consolidations of fire departments in Wake County. In order for the fire service in Wake County and in Knightdale to be sustainable mergers and consolidations will need to be evaluated. (Future of the Fire Service in Wake County, Sustainable Fire Service Delivery Report)

Eastern Wake Fire Department and Knightdale Fire Department almost have a natural tendency for their departments to be together. Much of the two departments fire districts are intertwined with one another. Knightdale Fire Department is essentially a municipal department that was splintered away from what was once the Knightdale Volunteer Department and is now the Eastern Wake Fire Department (Legeros, Wake County Fire Department History's) As Vernon Ward stated when he was interviewed regarding the merger of the two departments "so what you are talking about is putting the two departments back together again?"

As stated in the literature review from the "A Systematic Approach to Fire Service Consolidation and Merger ICMA" and as is the situation with the two fire departments in the Knightdale area are several of the arguments for a merger or consolidation. In the Knightdale community you have departments that are immediately adjacent to one another or in this case having districts that are intertwined. Each of these departments with duplication in services in administration duplicates resources, and duplicate responses on incident responses. (Geocities)

Stephanie Thompson discusses the benefits of consolidation which many of these benefits would be relevant in a merger in the Knightdale community. With a merged department there could be a savings in apparatus cost as not as many pieces of apparatus would be needed. With a larger organization there would be enhanced career opportunities for the employees of the organization. The two departments as one would have more funding for training and a joint training facility could be developed. With the larger department better training for the two departments with perhaps funding for a dedicated training officer or an Assistant Chief dedicated to training. With a merger the potential to eliminate the duplication of the fire service in the old town area by transitioning the Hester Street station from a staffed station to a volunteer station and the savings that come with this more efficient personnel allocation. The elimination of redundancy in the fire service in the Knightdale Community as was mentioned in the surveys. (Spotting a Trend, Fire Department Consolidation) Efficiency in the service provided is becoming even more important in the fire service as we noted in several of the articles reviewed in the literature review. Additionally the mergers that the Chiefs discussed in their interviews were primarily motivated for efficiency.

In the literature review and the research one of the biggest concerns in the merger process is the people. People are what makes an organization and if the firefighters from both entities don't come into the merger feeling comfortable with what is happening there could be problems and issues. As discussed in the article "8 Ways to Integrate a Merger Successfully" and as pointed out in the interviews with the Chiefs who had been through mergers or consolidations proper planning and preparation along with good communication through the process will lead to a successful outcome. Be realistic in the process, be diligent in your planning hitting all the details, figure out what the big problems could be that could kill the merger, throw enough

resources and people at the planning process, use the best people in the areas they are best suited for, work with the people in finance to get the numbers right, as you move forward in the process don't be afraid to cheer on the successes.

In step 6 of Chief Bryan's steps for consolidation he says 'change does not come without cost'. In the interviews with James Overton the Town of Knightdale Finance Director he discussed his concern about in the planning to be sure that all potential cost are addressed and priced out up front so that in a potential agreement they can be discussed and covered with Wake County for them to cover or share the cost of. Chief Early was the most vocal in his interview about how his organization failed to cover all the cost going forward. Additionally Chief Early expanded on how within their agreement the future cost sharing of the merged area was not discussed and agreed upon and it was going to have a negative effect on the Wake Forest budget. In considering a potential merger all areas of upfront and down the road cost must be explored.

In looking at others research of merging and consolidating fire departments much of the research for a merger in the Knightdale community is similar. Henning discussed that poor leadership or lack of leadership led to merging fire departments failing. In the departments researched for this paper although none were found that the merger had failed as of the writing of this paper the problems that were encountered were a result of poor communication, poor planning, and poor leadership in executing the plan.

Recommendation

This research project is an attempt to explore the potential benefits and cost to the Town of Knightdale and to Wake County if Eastern Wake Fire Department and Knightdale Fire Department merged. Additionally research was conducted to see how a merged department may function and operate.

The first step in moving through the process of bringing Eastern Wake Fire Department and Knightdale Fire Department together would be to determine what the process would be called. In the questionnaires and the definitions that were researched the best term to use would be to call it a merger. A consolidation is very similar to a merger and also could be used. The term acquisition would need to be stayed away from as its definition and the interpretation of it could make the county personnel feel like their coming over to Knightdale as being a takeover and not something that they have a say so in.

In reviewing the research regarding the cost of running the fire service in the Knightdale community as one department instead of two the research show that there could be a cost savings. This savings would be on an annual basis and could be even greater as the years go by. The initial year there may be a slightly larger start- up cost if the Town of Knightdale chose to ask that the county repair or replace any worn out or run down equipment prior to the merger. To allow the town to come into the merger clean and cut down the risk of the town having large expected cost at the onset.

Merging the departments would be beneficial to the Town of Knightdale in allowing it to expand the number of paid personnel it has available to respond to structure fires. Additionally the town has explored and looked at options in building a fire station in the west side of town to cover the growth the town has experienced in this area. The town would pay two million dollars for this station and then would have to pay to staff this station. With a merged department the town could serve this west area of town and be the contracted department with the county to serve the county area.

For the county a merged department would be beneficial in cost saving especially as the town continues to grow and erodes away the county area that is part of the tax base that the

county uses to operate Eastern Wake Fire Department. With the county looking at the sustainability of the fire service the importance of merging departments with municipal departments becomes more critical. Without the merger the county will lose revenue but in order to maintain the same level of service they will have to raise taxes. In a merger where the funding for the county department is tied to either call volume, population etc. than as the rural area shrinks or as the town expands the funding will change and be a greater responsibility for the town. In both instances for the town and the county merging the departments would have long term and short term benefits. For the town the benefits would be not just for cost savings but would improve the level of service with the number of staffed firefighters increasing. With the close proximity 8/10ths of a mile between the county Hester St. station and the Town of Knightdale station making the Hester St. station an unmanned volunteer station would have no negative affect on response times as shown in the study but could save money in staffing and the cost of operating the station. For both the town and the county a merger could have a positive impact on the level of fire service in the Knightdale community.

Merging the departments would improve the level of service in the community through a more cohesive department responding to incidents in the area. Presently the departments operate and function as two separate entities. In a merged department they would work as one department operating under the same standard operating procedures and command structure. The departments are now running several hundred calls together under the closest station agreements in place. With a merged department the responses would be more efficient with only one unit responding where two are presently bringing a cost savings. Today the departments train together a couple of times a month, with a merged department the training of the personnel would occur

daily and would make the operations on incident scene run smoother and more coordinated operation.

As the research showed some long term problems with a merger could be averted with good planning and communication. As stated earlier the town looking at the assets of Eastern Wake Fire Department and planning on the county purchasing or funding the replacement of the equipment would be beneficial in eliminating any unexpected problems in the future. A good plan of how the revenue for the merged department for the operating budget will be important to eliminating any future problems. With the 2014 budget of the two departments (1.6 million county, 1.1 million town) in a comparison to the 2014 population (17,000 county 11,761 town) served of the two departments would be an equitable split of close to 60% to 40% comparatively. The proportion of the number of residents in the county service area in the Alert Fire District to the number of residents in the town would be a good long term means to determine the amount of funding the town and the county should put towards the operating budget of a merged department. Just as important having this decided up front should eliminate any problems as the town's population grows and the county's shrinks. (Appendix D)

As in many mergers and consolidations having good communication regarding what is going on as the process moves forward is a key. As the talks were to proceed there could not be anything that causes more alienation or distrust especially for Eastern Wake Fire Department than for them to feel like they have no idea what is going on and worse yet that with poor communications false rumors can spread rampantly and negatively affect the merged department from the onset.

In the process and within the merged department it would be important to include members from both departments to work through the merger and to get the department started as

a unified unit. This is important as people by human nature are afraid of change and thus the more Eastern Wake members are involved in what is going on the more of a buy in they will have to the merged department. As the departments move forward as one department they should work together using members from what was both entities to collaborate on items such as uniforms, patches, badges etc. In the design of these items there should be part of what was once the Eastern Wake Fire Department included in the design so as not to forget the past and the history of that department.

As with the merger of any separate organizations being sure that all of the legal and state issues are handled properly in a timely manner would be important. Working with town attorneys, county attorneys, the North Carolina Department of Insurance, and the North Carolina Secretary of State would all be important in insuring that the transition would run smoothly.

Using Chief Ward's matrix for the merger of two fire departments would be a good tool. With the experience and thought put into the matrix it would allow Eastern Wake Fire and the Town of Knightdale to be sure that they cover all avenues as they contemplate and move through a merger process. (Appendix H)

The merger of Eastern Wake Fire Department and the Town of Knightdale Fire Department should begin in the next couple of years for so many reasons. As the county looks to do this with many departments for these two departments it makes so much sense. But if this process occurs just remember what's the incentive for the various parties to initiate, support, resist, or reject change? Remember, everything involved here is ultimately about people. The fire trucks and fire stations are staffed by and serve people. Those pesky humans are also the ones paying taxes, electing officials, running the departments and government agencies, and sitting in the chairs of those who make the ultimate decision concerning a merger.

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Appendix A

Questions to Finance people:

1. Have you had any experience in merging two organizations and specifically two fire departments?
2. What do you see the financial cost to the town and the county being short term and long term?
3. Do you believe there could be savings with a merged department versus the two separate departments?
4. What would it take to financially to merge the departments?
5. From the financial end what do you think could cause the failure of the merger?
6. What do you think of making Eastern Wake station 2 an unmanned station?

Appendix B:

Questions to Leaders of Merged Departments?

1. Do you believe your department is operating more efficiently after the merger?
2. What would you do differently if you had the opportunity?
3. How long did it take for you to merge the departments from the first talks till the departments operated as one unit?
4. What were the major problems you had to work through in the merger process?
5. What could cause a merger to fail?

Appendix C:

Questionnaire to the Firefighters

1. Which department do you belong to?
2. Do you believe the merger will improve the fire service in the community?
3. In what areas do you believe there will be improvement?
4. What do you believe will be the biggest obstacles to a merger between the departments?
5. What would you like to see come out of the merger?
6. What do you think of making Eastern Wake Station 2 on Hester St. an unmanned station?

Appendix D

Eastern Wake Fire and Knightdale Fire 2014 Budgets

**Annual Budget Worksheet
Estimated Expenditures
For the Fiscal Year Ending
EWFD and Knightdale
Budget Comparison
Fire Department**

30-Jun-14**Current Year****Total
Cost**

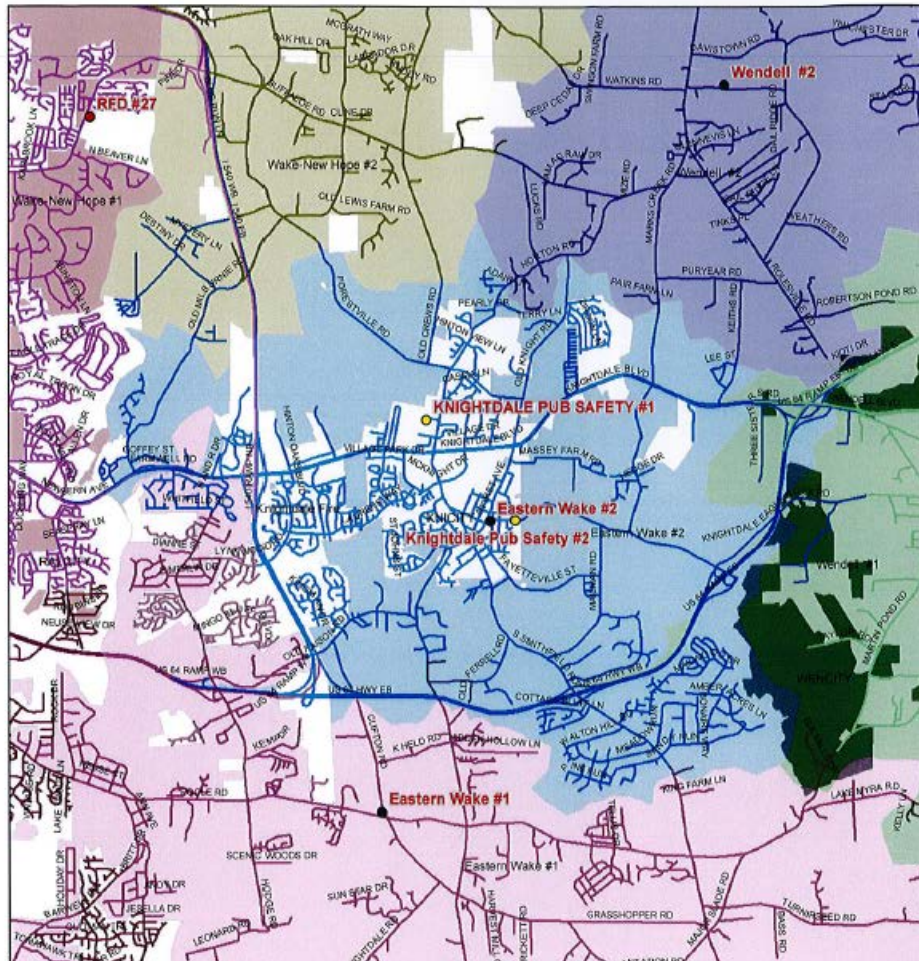
Account Title	Account Number		Knightdale 2014	County 2014	Both Depts.
Personnel Services					
Salaries & Wages-Regular	10-5110	5000	523,224	894,288	1,412,046
Temp Salaries/ Vol. Stipend	10-5110	5010	96,856	33,500	107,071
Overtime	10-5110	5020	5,000	45,612	5,000
Fire Supplement	10-5110	5025	25,000		25,000
Longevity	10-5110	5030	9,640		9,640
Merits	10-5110	5040	5,231		5,231
FICA	10-5110	5050	50,869	74,465	118,864
Life ADD & STD Insurance	10-5110	5055	4,039	16,744	10,792
Retirement	10-5110	5060	40,164	88,328	101,551
NC Firemen's Retirement	10-5110	5065	5,820	5,280	9,660
Health Insurance	10-5110	5070	71,496	156,315	206,016
EAP/ Health	10-5110	5075			2,280
401(K)	10-5110	5080	28,405		71,819
Unemployment	10-5110	5090	3,365	6,060	7,565
Workers Compensation	10-5110	5085	25,615		54,228
Sub-Total			894,724	1,320,592	2,146,763
Operations & Maintenance					
Professional Services	10-5110	6000	600	10,000	1,150
Uniforms	10-5110	6010			

			19,000	7,500	34,400
Office Supplies	10-5110	6050	600	2,300	2,600
Office Supplies Copier	10-5110	6100	600	2,000	2,400
Supplies - Food	10-5110	6105	800	3,500	2,000
Supplies - Fire Prevention & Safety	10-5110	6110	5,000	3,000	6,500
Supplies & Materials	10-5110	6200	10,000	5,510	19,550
Travel & Meals	10-5110	6250	750		1,500
Gas & Oil	10-5110	6260	19,110	30,800	45,792
Telephone	10-5110	6300	7,320	4,500	17,880
Postage	10-5110	6350	300	567	600
Utilities	10-5110	6400	12,840	25,716	36,840
Repair & Maintenance-Building	10-5110	6450		9,850	6,000
Repair & Maintenance-Equipment	10-5110	6500	6,000	8,400	13,000
Repair & Maintenance-Vehicles	10-5110	6510	22,600	25,000	47,600
Repair & Maintenance-Pub Safety	10-5110	6525			
Advertising	10-5110	6550		300	300
Training	10-5110	6600	4,000	2,300	6,000
Medical Exams	10-5110	6650		9,450	
Contracted Services	10-5110	6700	12,455	2,800	48,148
Computer Equipment	10-5110	6750	-	17,000	
Liability Insurance	10-5110	6800	6,300	48,000	39,800
Dues & Memberships	10-5110	6850	2,027	1,200	3,111
Volunteer Support & Incentives	10-5110	6877	6,500	300	10,320
Miscellaneous	10-5110	6880	-	2,000	
Grant funded expenditures	10-5110	6950			
Sub-Total			136,802	221,993	345,491
Capital Outlay					
Capital Outlay > \$10,000	10-5110	7100			
Equipment > \$1,000 < \$10,000	10-5110	7200			

Debt Payment	109,361	109,361
Sub-Total	-	-
Department Total	1,031,526	1,651,946
	2,601,615	

Operating Costs of Increased Fire Service (revised 7/17/13)							
IMPLEMENTATION COSTS	Quantity	Rate	Total Outlay				
Physical for new hires	17	275.00	\$4,675.00				
Legal Fees - Negotiations with Wake County contract			10,000.00				
Drug screening for new hires	18	59.00	1,062.00				
Background check for new hires	18	15.00	270.00				
Upgrade HR, Payroll, & Employee Self Service Software from 150 to 200 employees	1	2,630.00	2,630.00				
Desktop Computers	3	900.00	2,700.00				
Microsoft Office Anti Virus, & Windows License	3	366.58	1,099.74				
Email License per email address	18	90.33	1,625.94				
Laptops for firetrucks	2	2,000.00	4,000.00				
Software for firetruck laptops	2	100.00	200.00				
Networking Infrastructure (router, switch)	1	2,500.00	2,500.00				
Labor for network installation	8	160.00	1,280.00				
Shortel 115 Telephone	4	323.10	1,292.40				
Shortel 230 Telephone for Admin Assist or Reception	1	413.10	413.10				
Telephone switch & misc equip for conversion	1	1,035.68	2,005.00				
Labor for telephone installation	16	175.00	2,800.00				
EMT Upgrade ¹ - per Tim, not needed EWFD has equipment in storage to upgrade. Original est. \$4,000			0.00				
Airpacks ²	24	4,500.00	108,000.00				
Masks	60	700.00	42,000.00				
Compressor at Clifton station to refill air tanks			38,850.00				
Radio & Pager reprogramming ³	32	100.00	3,200.00				
Fire Alarm system installation at Clifton Station			12,500.00				
Fire Alarm system installation at Hester Street Station			9,500.00				
3 sets Station Uniforms for new hires (includes shorts)	17	804.00	13,668.00				
1 set Dress Uniforms for new hires	17	500.00	8,500.00				
Helmet badges ⁴	17	35.00	595.00				
Complete set of turnout gear (no helmets) ⁵	17	2,200.00	37,400.00				
Shorelines System Wired at Clifton Rd & Hester St for electrical safety	1	16,000.00	16,000.00				
Keyless Entry System at both locations			16,000.00				
TOK Logo on vehicles	9	500.00	4,500.00				
Signage at Stations	2	500.00	1,000.00				
Additional bunk room at current Knightdale Station			2,000.00				
Total Implementation			\$352,266.18				
RECURRING EXPENDITURES		Rate x 12 months	Annual Cost				
Professional Services	2	275.00	\$550.00				
Uniform replacement items ⁶	17	400.00	6,800.00				
Replacement Gloves ⁶	15	40.00	600.00				
Replacement Hoods, Misc. ⁶	15	90.00	1,350.00				
Turnout Coat & Pants ⁷	2	1,750.00	3,500.00				
T-Shirts & Sweat Shirts			3,000.00				
Office Supplies			2,000.00				
Office Supplies-Copier	12	150.00	1,800.00				
Supplies - Food	12	100.00	1,200.00				
Fire Prevention Safety Training Supplies			1,500.00				
Supplies and Materials			9,550.00				
Travel & Meals			750.00				
Cell Phones ⁸	5	660.00	3,300.00				
Telephone Service ⁹	12	605.00	7,260.00				
Gas & Oil ¹⁰			26,682.00				
Postage & Shipping			300.00				
Utilities ¹¹			24,000.00				
Repairs & Maintenance							
Building ¹²			6,000.00				
Equipment ¹²			7,000.00				
Vehicles ¹²			25,000.00				
Advertising			300.00				
Training			2,000.00				
Contract Services (see attached detail)			35,693.58				
Liability Insurance			33,500.00				
Dues & Memberships			1,082.50				
Volunteer Support & Incentives			3,820.00				
Software Renewals & Licenses for 3 desktops & 2 laptops			2,598.55				
Debt Service			109,361.00	3 yrs remaining			
Total Recurring			\$320,497.63				
Notes:							
Projected costs of expansion assume that Clifton Rd Station will be set up & operated similar to current station & Hester St converted to other use.							
The actual number of Part-time, Limited Service, & Volunteers added/subtracted affects multiple line items above. For purposes of this document it was assumed that we would add 15 volunteers.							
Protected costs assume no additional staffing needed for PW for vehicle, building, and grounds maintenance. Assumes janitorial and grounds maintenance would be performed by fire staff.							
¹ TOK is an EMT department, an upgrade to EWFD with EMT dept supplies and equipment would be needed.							
² Airpacks - TOK uses MSA, EWFD uses Scott. Both station's mask and/or airpacks should be interchangeable. Upgrade required to at least one of the stations.							
³ Radio & Pager reprogramming assumes that all radios and pagers convey with merger and are in good working condition. Otherwise \$584 per replacement set. (17 x \$584 = \$9,928.00)							
⁴ The purchase of helmet badges assumes that helmets convey from EWFD and are in good condition. Otherwise \$250 per replacement. (17 x \$250 = \$4,250)							
⁵ There is a potential for savings on turnout gear but is dependent upon suitability of EWFD gear for new hires. This option would require replacing EWFD logo with patch.							
⁶ In first year the replacement uniforms would not be necessary but would be needed for subsequent years. New hire uniforms are included in implementation costs.							
⁷ In the first 2-3 years this cost may not be necessary. See note ⁵ above. If EWFD turnout gear is used for new hires, this line item should be increased to account for replacing older sets of turnout gear regularly.							
⁸ Cell phones to 2 Assist Chiefs & 3 Captains @ \$55/mnth.							
⁹ Telephone increase in cost is for providing 5 additional analog lines \$35/mnth & service at Clifton Rd Station, 2 aircards for vehicle laptops @ \$40/mnth, and T1 line							
¹⁰ Gasoline & Diesel budgeted at an avg of \$4.00 per gallon -Potential savings from non duplication of call response.							
¹¹ Amounts for PSNC, Progress Energy, & City of Raleigh utilities taken from EWFD FY14 bduget.							
¹² Repair & Maintenance amounts are taken from EWFD FY14 budget. Big maintenance items not included in this proposal. Clifton Station is 18 yrs and Hester Station is 68 yrs HVAC (3) at Clifton Rd is at end of life (1995). Estimate \$6,000-\$7,000 (ea) to replace.							
EWFD currently on well and septic system. If became non usable in future City of Raleigh quoted \$20,000 to hook up to City water. No sewer service currently available. Annexation would be required.							
Hester St. Station updated and renovated kitchens & bathrooms approx 2007.							
Clifton Rd Station requires updating. Ceilings stained, wallpaper removed throughout. Paint?							

Appendix F: Eastern Wake Fire and Knightdale Fire Response Areas



Appendix G: Falls and Wake Forest Merger Management Practice Assessment



**Falls and Wake Forest Fire Merger
Management practices assessment**

Administrative

Falls	Wake Forest	Potential improvements/ impacts	Timeline
<i>Insurance Services Office (ISO grading)</i>			
Currently has a 5/9E rating	Currently has a class 6 rating	By incorporating both into the Wake Forest insurance district could result in an improved rating for current Falls residents	7/1/2011 plan, effective on 7/1/2012
<i>Contractual agreements</i>			
Currently has various contracts with the City of Raleigh (\$16,000)	Unknown	Switch contracts to reflect the new organization name (Wake Forest Fire)	7/1/2011 plan, effective on 7/1/2012

Falls	Wake Forest	Potential improvements/ impacts	Timeline
<i>Policies and Procedures</i>			
Combined committee to review current SOP's	Combined committee to review current procedures	Committee review and recommend a seamless transition and congruent procedures	7/1/2011 (effective 1/1/2012)
<i>Board of Directors</i>			
Currently consist of 6 members, (1) ex-officio	Consist of ? members	Develop a mutual Board representation	7/1/2011 (effective 7/1/2012)
<i>Volunteer Benefit Package</i>			
Additional life insurance policy (\$25,000), pension fund, NCSFA membership	Unknown	Review benefits from each organization and blend a quality medium for both	7/1/2011 (effective 1/1/2012)
<i>Charters and Articles of Incorporation</i>			
Existing	Existing	Research how to merge two documents together	3/1/2011 (effective 7/1/2012)
<i>Response district</i>			
Existing	Existing	Determine an appropriate establishment point for a revised Wake Forest ISO district	5/1/2011 (effective 7/1/2012)
<i>Future Planning</i>			
Existing immediate, short, and long term goals	Existing immediate, short, and long term goals	Incorporate both plans into one achievable manner	4/1/2011 (effective 6/1/2011)

Personnel			
Falls	Wake Forest	Potential improvements/ impacts	Timeline
<i>Duty Crew</i>			
Utilize 2-4 personnel per weeknight and weekend	Limited use, fill in for staff	Develop a policy on the use of duty crew coverage	3/1/2011 (effective 7/1/2011)
<i>24 hour staff</i>			
Currently utilizes PT staff 11 hours per weekday, volunteers to supplement	Currently utilizes 24 hour paid staff on first out apparatus, volunteers to supplement additional apparatus	Analyze current staffing and develop a working situation for both organizations	7/1/2011 (effective 7/1/2012)
<i>Organization re-structure</i>			
Operates with 7 officers (8) positions	unknown	Blend a rank structure congruent with qualifications, knowledge, and experience	5/1/2011 (prepared) (effective 1/1/2012)
<i>Expectations and responsibilities of officers</i>			
Existing	Existing	Compare both agencies expectations and develop a revised list of expectations while incorporating current FT staff of Wake Forest	5/1/2011 (prepared)
<i>Volunteer membership</i>			
Utilize 30 volunteer roster. Operations rely on volunteer	Unknown (main paid staff)	Develop a plan to incorporate volunteers	2/1/2011

Training

Falls	Wake Forest	Potential improvements/ impacts	Timeline
<i>In-house familiarization</i>			
Review training topics currently covered	Review training topics currently covered	Develop training topics that would facilitate a mutual working relationship	Begin 7/1/2011 operationally sound by 7/1/2012
<i>Expectations and policy</i>			
Review current policy	Review current policy	Develop a mutual set of expectations	3/1/2011
<i>Specialized apparatus</i>			
Currently utilizes a combination Hurst tool and boat	Currently utilizes rescue equipment, aerial device, air apparatus	Develop a program that would allow all personnel familiarization	Complete 11/1/2011

Services

Falls	Wake Forest	Potential improvements/ impacts	Timeline
<i>Existing equipment</i>			
Review equipment currently utilized	Review equipment currently utilized	Develop master asset list and insure placement	4/1/2011
<i>Existing apparatus</i>			
Review current placement of apparatus	Review current placement of apparatus	Develop plan for placement and justification of	2/1/2011

		apparatus	
<i>Existing uniforms</i>			
Examine current uniform	Examine current uniform	Provide recommendation for standardization	8/1/2011

<i>Apparatus maintenance and repair</i>			
Examine current practices and vendors	Examine current practices and vendors	Provide recommendation for standardization and any associated cost savings	3/1/2011

Appendix H: Fire Department Merger Matrix

Organization Overview

Survey Components	Name of FD	Name of FD	Merged Dept
1. RESPONSIBILITIES & LINES OF AUTHORITY			
A. Governing body policy guide maintained			
B. Fire Chief hired by contract			
1. term of contract			
2. periodic performance evaluation			
C. Fire Chief authority defined			
2. ATTRIBUTES OF SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZATIONS			
A. Rules & regulations maintained			
1. Process for revision provided			
B. Legal counsel maintained			
1. General counsel			
C. Financial controls in place			
1. Financial controls practiced			
D. Auditor			
1. term of contract			
E. Governing body minutes maintained			
1. Availability of minutes			
3. CHAIN OF COMMAND			
A. Unity of command			
B. Span of control			
C. Hiring/Firing authority			
4. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE			
A. Descriptions of all jobs maintained			
1. Job descriptions updated			
B. Employment agreement(s)			
1. Fire Chief			
2. Deputy Chief			
3. Assistant Chief			
4. Clerical			
5. Mechanic			
5. Other non-uniformed employee			
5. HISTORY AND FORMATION			
A. Maintained			
B. Individual/group responsible			
6. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF AGENCY			
A. Agency type			
B. Area, square miles			
C. Headquarters			
D. Fire stations			
E. Other facilities			
F. Emergency Vehicles			
1. Engines			

2. Ladders			
3. Tankers			
4. Rescues			
5. Brush Trucks			
6. Command Vehicles			
G. ISO Rating			
1. Date of most recent			
H. Total personnel, career & volunteer			
1. Adm/support personnel			
2. Operational personnel, career			
3. Operational personnel, volunteer			
4. Resident personnel			
7. FINANCE			
A. Assessed value, district			
B. Tax levy (last fiscal year)			
C. Total budget allocation (last fiscal year)			
D. Bond levy rate			
E. Tax rate to support budget (\$ per 100)			
8. DEMOGRAPHICS			
A. Population			
1. Percent Urban			
2. Percent Suburban			
3. Percent Rural			
9. ALARMS Last 12 months			
A. Medical/Rescue			
B. Fire			
C. Total			

MANAGEMENT COMPONENT

Survey Components	Name of FD	Name of FD	Merged Dept
1. MISSION, VISION, STRATEGIC PLANNING, GOALS & OBJECTIVES			
A. Mission statement adopted			
1. Displayed			
B. Strategic or master plan			
1. Adopted by governing body			
2. Published & available			
3. Periodic Review			
C. Agency goals & objectives established			
1. Available			
2. Periodic Review			
3. Tied to division performance standards			
4. Program goals & objectives established			
2. AVAILABILITY OF SOPs, RULES & REGS, POLICIES			
A. Copies of rules provided.			
1. Last date reviewed			
B. Copies of SOPs or guidelines available			
1. Regular update			
2. Process for development of new SOPs			
3. SOPs used in training evolutions			
C. Policy manual available			
1. Reviewed for consistency			
2. Reviewed for legal mandates			
3. Training on policies provided.			
3. CRITICAL ISSUES			
A. Critical issues are identified			
1. First critical issue			
2. Second critical issue			
3. Third critical issue			
4. CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE			
A. Challenges are Identified			
1. First challenge			
2. Second challenge			
5. INTERNET & EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS			
A. Internal communications			
1. Regularly scheduled staff meetings			
2. Staff meeting minutes			
3. Memos			
4. Employee Newsletter			
5. Employee Forums			
6. Open Door			
7. Bulletin Board			
8. Bottom to top process established			

9. E-mail			
B. External communications			
1. Community newsletter			
2. Advisory committee(s)			
3. Complaint process			
4. E-Mail			
5. Community survey			
6. Local community planning			
7. Website			
7. Social Media			
6. DECISION MAKING PROCESS			
A. Preferred methodology			
B. Decision making process established.			
7. DOCUMENT CONTROL			
A. Process for public access established			
B. Hard Copy files protected			
C. Computer files backed up.			
8. SECURITY			
A. Building security			
B. Office security			
C. Computer security			
D. Vehicle security			
E. Capital inventory maintained.			
1. Asset security system used.			
F. Monetary controls used.			
1. Cash access controls			
2. Credit card controls			
3. Purchasing controls			
9. REPORTING AND RECORDS			
A. Periodic report to governing body			
1. Financial report			
2. Management report			
3. Operational report			
4. Distributed to others			
B. Annual report produced			
1. Distributed to others			
2. Analysis of data provided			

PLANNING FOR FIRE & EMERGENCY MEDICAL PROTECTION

Survey Components	Name of FD	Name of FD	Merged Dept
1. ORGANIZING FOR THE PLANNING PROCESS			
A. Formally adopted planning process			
B. Tactical planning			
1. Pre-fire planning			
2. Specific hazard plans			
3. Other			
C. Operational planning			
1. Response planning			
2. Regional incident command			
3. Mutual aid planning			
4. Hazardous materials planning			
5. Disaster planning			
6. Other			
D. Master (long range) planning			
1. Strategic planning			
2. Capital improvement planning			
3. Financial planning			
4. Other			
2. REVIEW & EVALUATE CURRENT PLANNING PROCESS			
A. Planning group established			
B. Mission statement developed			
3. IDENTIFY CRITICAL ISSUES & ANALYZE CURRENT & FUTURE SERVICES			
A. Customer survey			
B. Citizen Involvement			
C. Business community involvement			
D. Governing body involvement			
E. Staff Participation			

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Survey Components	Name of FD	Name of FD	Merged Dept
1. POLICIES, RULES, REGULATIONS & OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES			
A. Human resource manager identified			
B. Personnel policy manual maintained			
1. Manual provided at initial hiring			
2. Training provided			
3. Periodic review and update			
C. Rules and regulations provided			
D. Operational guidelines provided			
E. Retention program established			
2. COMPENSATION, POINT SYSTEM, AND BENEFITS			
A. Uniformed employee compensation			
1. Fire Chief			
2. Deputy Chief			
3. Assistant Chief			
4. Battalion Chief			
5. Captain			
6. Lieutenant			
7. Fire Equipment Operator			
8. Firefighter I			
9. Firefighter II			
B. Non-uniformed employee compensation			
1. Administrative Assistant			
2. Data entry operator			
3. Fire data technician			
4. Fire equipment maint. Super.			
5. Equip. services mechanic			
C. Benefits			
1. Social security			
2. Workers compensation			
3. State Retirement			
4. Other Pension Funds			
5. Medical Insurance			
6. Dental Insurance			
7. Disability Insurance			
8. Life Insurance			
D. Volunteer compensation			
1. Compensation paid to:			
2. Rate of compensation			
3. Pension Fund or Retirement			
4. Additional compensation or benefits			
3. REPORTS AND RECORDS			
A. Personnel records maintained			

1. Application retained			
2. Historical records retained			
3. Performance evaluations retained			
4. Injury and accident records retained			
5. Health & exposure records maintained			
4. DISCIPLINARY PROCESS			
A. Disciplinary policy established			
B. Disciplinary process communicated			
C. Appeal process provided			
5. THE APPLICATION & RECRUITMENT PROCESS			
A. Recruitment program			
B. Application process			
1. Qualification check			
2. Reference check			
3. Background check			
4. Physical standards established			
5. Testing			
6. Interview			
7. Medical exam required			
6. TESTING, MEASURING AND PROMOTION PROCESS			
A. Periodic competence testing			
B. Periodic physical competence testing			
C. Periodic performance evaluations			
D. Promotional testing			
7. HEALTH AND SAFETY			
A. Medical standards established			
1. Periodic medical exam			
B. Safety committee established			
1. Membership			
2. Meetings			
3. Function			
4. Minutes			

STAFFING

Survey Components	Name of FD	Name of FD	Merged Dept
1. ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT STAFF			
A. Fire Chief			
B. Assistant Chief			
C. Deputy Chief			
D. Battalion Chief			
E. Training Officer			
F. Information system coordinator			
G. Administrative Assistant			
H. Accounting/Payroll Clerk			
I. Mechanic			
2. EMERGENCY SERVICE STAFF			
A. Deputy Chiefs			
B. Assistant Chiefs			
C. Captains			
D. Lieutenants			
E. Driver Operators			
F. Firefighters			
G. Volunteer Firefighters			
H. Fire Chaplains			
3. UTILIZATION OF CAREER & VOLUNTER COMPANIES			
A. Career company work schedule			
1. Length of normal duty period			
2. Beginning of normal duty shift (time)			
3. Call-back requirements			
4. Residency requirement			
B. Career company services			
1. Fire suppression			
2. Ems/rescue, first response EMT			
3. Ems, intermediate EMT			
4. Ems, advance life support			
5. Specialized rescue-1st responder			
6. Public education			
7. Hazardous materials response (level)			
C. Volunteer company schedule			
1. Residency requirements			
2. Assignment to company			
3. Alarm notification system			
D. Volunteer company services			
1. Fire suppression			
2. Ems/rescue, first response EMT			
3. Ems, intermediate EMT			
4. Ems, advance life support			
5. Specialized rescue			

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT AND REPLACEMENT PROGRAMS**Survey Components****Name of FD****Name of FD****Merged Dept**

1. FIRE STATIONS AND OTHER STRUCTURES			
A. Replacement Plan maintained			
1. Period of plan (from-to)			
2. Funding mechanism			
B. Construction planned for:			
1. One to two years out			
2. Three to four years out			
3. Five to ten years out			
2. APPARATUS			
A. Replacement Plan maintained			
1. Period of plan (from-to)			
2. Funding mechanism			
B. Purchase-refurbishment planned for:			
1. One to two years out			
2. Three to four years out			
3. Five to ten years out			
3. SUPPORT EQUIPMENT			
A. Plan maintained			
1. Period of plan (from-to)			
2. Funding mechanism			
B. Purchase planned for:			
1. One to two years out			
2. Three to four years out			
3. Five to ten years out			
4. METHODS OF FINANCING CAPITAL NEEDS			
A. General Fund			
B. Reserve fund(s)			
C. Revenue fund(s)			
D. General obligation bond			
E. Lease-Purchase			
F. Grants or gifting			
G. Special fees			

DELIVERY SYSTEM

Survey Components	Name of FD	Name of FD	Merged Dept
1. FIRE STATIONS			
A. Total area protected			
B. Total number of fire stations			
1. Number of stations staffed full-time			
2. Number of stations staffed part-time			
3. Number of unstaffed stations			
C. Response time goals adopted			
1. For fire emergencies			
2. For EMS emergencies			
3. Actual response times documented			
D. Standard response protocols adopted			
1. By alarm type (apparatus per alarm)			
2. By apparatus type (persons per app)			
2. APPARATUS			
A. Availability for dispatch			
1. Engine companies			
2. Ladder truck companies			
4. Tankers			
5. Heavy Rescue			
6. Medical Response Vehicles			
6. Wild land vehicles			
7. Command Vehicles			
B. Availability of reserves (response ready)			
1. Engines			
2. Ladder trucks			
3. Other Reserve Apparatus			
3. RISK ANALYSIS			
A. History of fire loss documented			
B. Major hazards plans utilized			
C. Pre-incident plans utilized			
D. Maps in all vehicles			
E. Mutual aid agreements in effect			
F. Duty officer system in place			
G. Liaison with public works			
1. Hydrant location/placement			
2. Main installation			
3. Fire flows calculated			
4. Fire hydrants marked			
5. Water sources identified			

TRAINING

Survey Components	Name of FD	Name of FD	Merged Dept
1. GENERAL TRAINING COMPETENCY			
A. Incident Command system			
2. TRAINING FACILITIES & RESOURCES			
A. Training ground (tower, props, pits)			
B. Classroom facilities			
C. VCR, projectors, computer simulations			
D. Books, magazines, instructional materials			
3. TRAINING PROCEDURES MANUAL			
A. Manual developed and utilized			
B. IFSTA manuals utilized			
4. METHODOLOGY UTILIZED FOR TRAINING			
A. Manipulative			
B. Task performances			
C. Annual training hours			
D. Use of lesson plans			
E. Night drills			
F. Multi-agency drills			
G. Multi-company drills			
H. Physical standards or requirements			
I. Annual performance evaluation conducted.			
5. OPERATIONS AND PERFORMANCE			
A. Disaster drills conducted			
B. Attention to safety			
C. Post incident critique			
D. Priority by management toward training			
6. RECORD KEEPING			
A. Individual training files maintained			
B. Records and files computerized			
C. Daily training records			
D. Company training records			
E. Training equipment inventoried			
F. Lesson plans utilized			
G. Pre-fire planning included in training			
H. Check-out system on training materials			
7. ADMINISTRATIVE PRIORITY			
A. Education and training of training officer			
B. Utilizing certified instructors			
C. Annual training report produced.			
D. Maintenance of training facilities			
8. TRAINING PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES			
A. Goals and objectives identified.			
B. Governing body support & concurrence			
C. Personnel knowledge and understanding			

FIRE PREVENTION

Survey Components	Name of FD	Name of FD	Merged FD
1. NEW CONSTRUCTION INVOLVEMENT			
A. Key-box entry program in place			
B. Hydrant flow records maintained			
2. FIRE SAFETY - PUBLIC EDUCATION			
A. Public information officer in place			
B. Feedback instrument used			
C. Public education in the following areas			
1. Calling 911			
2. EDITH (exit drills in the home)			
3. Smoke detector door to door program			
4. Fire extinguisher use			
5. Fire brigade training			
6. Elderly care and safety			
7. Curriculum utilized in schools			
8. Baby-sitting classes offered			
9. CPR, blood pressure checks offered			
10. Other programs offered			
D. Publications available to public			
E. Bilingual information available			
F. Annual report distributed to community			
3. FIRE INVESTIGATION			
A. Reports and records of all incidents made			
B. File, record & evidence security			
4. STATISTICAL COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS			
A. Records kept by computer			
1. Software utilized			
2. Type of operating platform			
B. Information kept in the following areas:			
1. Fire incidents			
2. Time of day and day of week			
3. Method of alarm (how received)			
4. Dispatch times			
5. Response times			
C. Information analyzed & used for planning			
D. Reports made and distributed			
F. Are fire facilities networked			
1. Email used			
2. FAX available			